



2020 Hampton Street • Room 3063A
P.O. Box 192 • Columbia, SC 29202
(803) 576-2083

Minutes January 25, 2016

Attendance:

Members present: Carol Kososki, John Grego, Jim Thomas, Charles Weber, Ann Furr, Glenice Pearson, Becky Bailey, Margaret DuBard, and Sam Holland

Absent: Jennifer Carter and Virginia Sanders

Others present:

Quinton Epps, Conservation Department
Nancy Stone-Collum, Conservation Department
Charlie Fisher, Conservation Department
Ken Driggers, Contract Legal Counsel
Betsy Kaemmerlen, Fuss & O'Neill
Chanda Cooper, Conservation Department Education Coordinator
Warren Harley, Richland County Assistant County Administrator
Mr. Helms, citizen

Chair, Carol Kososki welcomed visitors, made introductions and called the meeting to order at 3:35pm

Approval of Agenda: Charles Weber moved and Margaret DuBard seconded the motion to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes from November 30: John Grego moved and Jim Thomas seconded the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Report of the Chair

Carol expressed her appreciation to Charlie Fisher for the quality of the monthly minutes. She explained County Council has asked the Transportation Penny Advisory Committee (TPAC) for comments on how the role of the committee should be changed. TPAC was created to review, comment, on, and provide recommendations to Council on Penny Projects. Council will also be considering two different motions made by Seth Rose and Norman Jackson on restructuring TPAC.

Treasurer's Report

Nancy referred members to their copy of the Financial Report and indicated there may be some recommendations for expenditures at the February meeting. Becky Bailey made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report which was seconded by Jim. Motion carried.

Owens Field Update

Betsy Kaemmerlen with Fuss & O'Neill explained the project at Owens Field to improve stormwater discharges and the walking trail. Two stormwater structures will be improved and two new bioretention cells will be built. The project has been complicated due to the number of stakeholders. Last year the city and county agreed to combine the city improvements for the park with the county project in order to have one contractor to save time and money. Two bids were received in December and the lower bid came in \$222,000 over the budget for the county share. The options are to: find more money, reduce the scope of work, rebid, or use a combination. Quinton suggested deferring a payment due in March until the new fiscal year for a recent conservation easement, thus making \$50,000 available from Professional Services. He said Councilman Rose will ask the City of Columbia for an additional \$50,000. It is possible that portions of the project could be bid out as a future phase if funds are found. A second extension of the 319 grant from DHEC has been requested. Becky made a motion to approve \$50,000 for augmentation of this special project and was seconded by John. Motion carried unanimously.

Agricultural Initiatives of Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (RSWCD)

Chanda Cooper, Education Coordinator for the RC Conservation Department gave a brief overview of the history and function of Conservation Districts which promote the conservation of natural resources. RSWCD has a variety of youth education programs, teacher training programs, and programs for adults that focus on agriculture. One of the primary purposes of districts is to assist on the local level in the delivery of federal conservation programs through the USDA National Resource Conservation Service. RSWCD is the lead on a three-year Conservation Innovation Grant to conduct agricultural field trials to monitor soil health indicators and crop yields during three years of multi-species cover cropping and no-till management. Through an EPA 319 Grant, RSWCD is providing farmers and landowners in the impaired Twenty-five Mile Creek Watershed the opportunity to receive financial assistance to improve livestock health, forage production, and water quality. The District's Organic Richland Program helped to promote and build support for local, sustainable, and organic food through workshops and food summits. This kick started The Midlands Local Food Collaborative, stakeholders working to strengthen the local food system through technical assistance, education, infrastructure improvements, and community organization. RSWCD is participating in the reformation of the defunct SC Grazing Lands Coalition which addresses resource management and environmental concerns on grazing lands to help farmers improve the health of their livestock.

Carol mentioned that the Concept Plan for Tourism and Economic Development would cultivate eco – and agri-tourism which would complement some of RSWCD's programs.

Introduction

Warren Harley, Assistant County Administrator, has taken over Sparty Hammett's departments. He was introduced to RCCC members and pledged to support RCCC and find the resources for the Commission to help make Richland County better.

Historic Committee Report

Slave Dwelling Conference

Nancy reported three members of the Historic Committee met immediately prior to the commission meeting to discuss a request from Joseph McGill to help sponsor the 2 ½ day Slave Dwelling Project Conference which is scheduled for September 29 – October 1st at the Columbia Convention Center. The committee requested a specific proposal from Mr. McGill and more budgetary information. A recommendation may be ready for the February meeting regarding financial sponsorship. Glenice

Pearson pointed out that RCCC's History Initiative should be highlighted at the conference and will afford great exposure for the work being done locally.

Olympia Museum

The Committee approved a request to reallocate Olympia Museum grant funding to include architectural fees. In going through the county's permitting process, it was determined an architect is required for this type of project. A new grant agreement will be signed.

History Initiative

Glenice, Margaret DuBard, Jim Thomas, and Nancy met with Dr. Bobby Donaldson and graduate student Alexandria Russell to discuss progress on the initiative. A follow-up meeting is scheduled. One of RCCC's objectives is to improve the quality of cultural & historical tourism from many different perspectives and this project will help achieve that goal.

Margaret made a motion, seconded by Charles, to move the Executive Session to the end of the agenda. Motion carried.

Conservation Director's Report

Concept Plan RFP

Quinton explained only one bid was received for the project and it substantially exceeded the budget. Tracy Hegler, Planning Department Director, will review the RFP. If the bid proposal fits Planning's criteria, they may be willing to help with funding since it is a planning document that fits in with the Master Plan for Lower Richland and the updated Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element.

Updates

A flood recovery update was included in everyone's packet. Charles questioned the status of Palmetto Utilities Spears Creek amendment request. Quinton will check on its status. Jim asked if there had been any interaction with Bob Perry from DNR regarding the Wateree River Heritage Preserve. Various Facebook comments indicated it has not been open to the public except for hunting and no information is available online. John said the Preserve was to re-open today. Quinton will look into this.

Conservation Coordinator's Report

Grant Updates

Nancy encouraged members to read the grantees' quarterly reports. Grantees have been reminded all work must be completed by June 30.

Greenways

The Vista Greenway from Taylor St. to Elmwood should be completed by June 4th. The Three Rivers Greenway from the Saluda River I-26 to 126 is in the process of being permitted. Construction will begin later this year.

The third priority for Transportation Penny greenways is Gills Creek Middle Watershed, also known as Sec. A. Two years ago, RCCC funded a concept plan for the Gills Creek Middle Watershed Greenway which has been further developed by Holt Consulting, The LandPlan Group South, and HDR. The greenway is designed to run from the southern tip of Lake Katherine to Bluff Road, approximately 4.4 miles. A public meeting will be held February 11 at Brennan School from 6:30 -8:00pm to discuss this project. The 2.2 million dollar project is over budget so changes will be made.

Richland County Conservation Commission - Minutes January 25, 2016

Margaret made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss a property acquisition.

John made a motion to come out of Executive Session. No actions were taken.

Charles made a motion to rescind the previously approved option for Project M (Oct. 25, 2015); to proceed with negotiations as discussed in executive session; and to incorporate the results of the RFP for Economic Development. Ann seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10pm.

Charlie Fisher, Administrative Assistant